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Celebrated Gypsy Jazz Group to Accompany Silent Films at EIU's Doudna

Jan-07-2011

The Hot Club of San Francisco will revive a lost tradition when it presents "Silent Surrealism," an evening of silent films accompanied by original gypsy jazz scores, at Eastern Illinois University on Friday, Jan. 21.

The evening's events, which will be held in the Doudna Fine Arts Center, will begin at 6:30 p.m. with a free lecture and question-and-answer session in the Lecture Hall. The ticketed concert will begin at 7:30 p.m. in Dvorak Concert Hall.

"Silent Surrealism" brings to life the mid-20th century French countryside when gypsy caravans would set up camp; project silent films onto whatever surface was available; and play instruments, matching every scene with characteristic virtuosity, passion and humor.

The Hot Club of San Francisco is an ensemble of accomplished and versatile musicians celebrating the music of Django Reinhardt and Stephane Grappelli's pioneering Hot Club de France, which was founded in 1934.

The ensemble borrows the all-string instrumentation of violin, bass and guitars from the original Hot Club, but breathes new life into the music with innovative arrangements of classic tunes and original compositions from the group's superb lead guitarist Paul Mehling.

The San Francisco Chronicle has called The Hot Club of San Francisco "one of the most cohesive and entertaining gypsy swing bands in the United States," and their playing has been described as "intricate, scorching and often brilliant" by Acoustic Guitar magazine.

The following films are featured in "Silent Surrealism": "It's a Bird" by Charlie Bowers (1930); "Now You Tell One," Bowers (1926); "The Fall of the House of Usher," James Sibley Watson and Melville Webber (1928); and "The Land Beyond the Sunset," The Edison Co. (1912).

The presentation is supported by the Performing Arts Fund, a program of Arts Midwest funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, with additional contributions from the Illinois Arts Council, General Mills Foundation and Land O'Lakes Foundation.

Tickets -- \$15 for the general public, \$12 for EIU employees and senior citizens, and \$7 for students -- may be purchased in person at the Doudna Fine Arts Center Box Office, by telephone at 217-581-3110, or online at <http://www.doudnatix.com>.

The Doudna Fine Arts Center is a division of the EIU College of Arts and Humanities. For more information on the facility and scheduled events, please see <http://www.eiu.edu/doudna>.



Hot Club of San Francisco (Photo Credit: Laura Turbow)